



Swiss Census Records

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Class Objective:

In this presentation you will learn about helpful records for the Swiss census, where to locate them and how to access them.

INTRODUCTION

Before the year 1850, the Swiss census [Volkszählung] was handled on a cantonal basis, meaning that there was no standardized system to account for the population in place at that time. Information obtained in these could vary between cantons and often was more for statistical purposes only.

The first federal census was taken in 1850 and included the following information:

- Households
- Buildings and residences
- Age/birth information
- Religion
- Social status
- Foreign residence

Canton Aargau

The Family History Library has the census records for this canton for the years 1837 and 1850.

The 1837 census was filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah in 1990 and consists of 4 microfilm rolls. They are not digitized.

The films are arranged by the following districts:

Aarau, Baden, Bremgarten, (first part of alphabet) on film 1692519

Bremgarten (second part of alphabet), Villingen, Fischbach, Gößlikon, Brugg, Kulm, Laufenburg, Eigen-Niederzeihen on film 1705871

Laufenburg, Niederzeihen-Wil, Lenzburg, Muri, and Rheinfelden on film 1705872

Zofingen and Zurzach on film 1705873

Information Contained in the 1837 Aargau Census

- House number
- Arranged alphabetically within given districts
- Surnames and given names
- Gender
- Places of citizenship and origin
- Foreign residence

The 1850 census was also filmed by The Genealogical Society of Utah in 1990. These consist of 7 rolls of microfilm and also are not digitized. They are also arranged by districts as follows:

Aarau, Baden, Bellikon-Mägenwil on film 1705874

Baden, Mägenwil-Würenlos, Bremgarten on film 1705875

Brugg, Kulm: Beinwil-Leimbach on film 1705876

Kulm: Leimbach-Zezwil, Laufenburg on film 1705877

Lenzburg, Muri: Abtwil-Muri on film 1705878

Muri: Muri-Zuzgen, Rheinfelden, Zofingen: Aarburg-Oftringen on film 1705879

Zofingen: Oftringen-Zofingen, Zurzach on film 1705880

Information Contained in the 1850 Aargau Census

- House number
- Running number
- Family and given names
- Gender
- Citizenship, canton and foreign land
- Religion
- Marital status
- Occupation

Canton Basel

For Canton Basel there are census records available for the city of Basel which are also at the FamilySearch.org website. The time periods of these records begins in 1590 as a register of inhabitants, population counts, horses and animals and continues through various years. Later for the years 1798-1803 there will be heads of households, family members and renters and occupations. The two film numbers for these records are 1196919 and 1196920, the later also being digitized and available online.

For the census of later years of Basel-Stadt, there are again various years beginning in 1815-1860

For the Canton Basel Federal Census of 1850, there is an online link to a PDF
https://ipna.unibas.ch/bbs/pdf/BBS_Volkszaehlung_1850_Basel.pdf

Basel PDF Headings

ID Number and Name		Age	Year	Gender	Status	Religion	Occupation	Citizenship	Canton	Residence status Property Source page	
Identität											
ID-Nr	Name und Vornam	Alter	Jahr-gang	Frau f Mann m	Zivil- Konfe- stand ssion	berufliche Tätigkeit oder Gewerbe	Staatszugehörigkeit Nation	Wohn- Grund- Kanton status besitz	Quelle Seite		
1	Sulger-Wohnlich Rudolf	46	1904	m	v	p	St. Johann-Quartier	1	2	6	13

V. Married Verheiratet		Address and Quarter		House number	Households Per house	Persons in household	Persons in the house
I. Unmarried ledig							
W. Widow/er Witwe/r							

Canton Bern

To check for holdings in the Bern Archives, you can go to the following site:

<http://www.query.sta.be.ch/volltextsuche.aspx>

When you find a topic that interests you, you should remember to open the various drop-down boxes. Although the website text will be in English, do not use the search term "census". Rather use the term Volkszählung. After determine which option you would like to look at, click on the icon under the AP (archive Plan) heading. This will open more drop-down options.

Please be aware that at this time, these items are not available to use online. You would need to write the archive to see whether they would help you research this.

Another item of interest for the Canton Bern is a book containing transcriptions of the male citizens aged 20-69 from Bern Canton, who took oaths of allegiance in 1798. These are arranged by district and alphabetically by surname. Text is in German and English. There are three volumes.

The Family History call number is 949.454 P49r v.1-3. You can search for copies elsewhere by going to <https://www.worldcat.org/>. ISBN: 0897253760.

Canton Fribourg

FamilySearch.org has online census records for the following years:

1811, 1818, 1831, 1834 (indexed), 1836, 1839, 1842, 1845, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880.

Below you will find charts for two of these years showing how the headings are arranged. Terminology will be somewhat similar for the various years, but may vary as to what is required on the specific format.

Canton Fribourg Census Headings 1811

Canton Fribourg Census Headings

List of Names of the Population of the Community of _____ Parish of _____ taken on _____ (date)

House number. Include town quarter or by property owner	Family Surname and baptismal name of every person and child in community, including those absent from the Canton.	Place of origin of foreigners	Canton or country	Age	Social standing or occupation	Residence of those absent from the Canton				
						Community	Canton or Country	State	Military Service	Regiment

Canton Ticino

The census was instigated in this region by Napoleon for the purpose of military conscription.

The holdings of the Family History Library include two films. Film 1196718 which covers the year 1808 and film 1196719 which is the 1837 census.

Ticino 1837 Census Headings

Numero progressivo delle Famiglie	Famiglia	Numero progressivo		Cognome	Nome di Battesimo	Cognome e Nome de' Genitori	Epoca della Nascita	Epoca di Matrimonio	Epoca della Morte, cangiamento di Domicilio di Famiglia e Donne che sortono per effetto di Matrimonio	Osservazione
		dei Maschi	delle Femmine							
Running number of the families	Family	Running numbers		Surname	Baptism name of children	Name and surname of the parents	Date of birth	Date of marriage	Date of death, change of domicile, of family or women who left as a result of marriage.	Observations (comments)
		of males	of females							

Ticino Census Headings 1808

Heading Translations for 1808 Census in the Ticino area of Switzerland

Tabella della popolazione della Comune [sic] di _____ - circolo di _____ - distretto di _____

Schedule of the population of the Community of _____ - circle of _____ - district of _____

#	Cognome della famiglia (Surname of family)	Nome di battesimo (Baptism or first name)	Età compiuta (Age completed; at last birthday)	MASCHI						Numero delle femmine (Number of females)	Osservazioni (Observations)
				(Males)							
				Ammogliato (Married)	Vedovo (Widower)	Nubile (Single)	Vicino (Living nearby)	Domiciliato (Resident of the comune)	Presente (Present)		

Napoleon instigated the census of all males in 1808 and used it to form his armies.

"The census started around 1808. Prior to this, church records reflect the population count. There was a lot of information collected about men, including age, location, etc. For women, there was just a tally and no information. Within the family, the oldest male was the head of the household. This could be the father, the grandfather, or the great grandfather. Families usually consisted of 20 members or more, including grandparents and other relatives. Most people did not live past age 65." (taken from http://www.cired.vt.edu/cesa/prospectivestudents/pros_history.html)

Canton Zürich

There is a register for the filmed Canton Zürich census. It can be found both in book form and in digital form on the FamilySearch website at this link:

<https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/260897?availability=Family%20History%20Library>.

There are many localities on this film, and since they are not indexed, it will be necessary to look at the pages for the correct locality. The register will help get you to the right film and narrow down your search greatly.

Although mainly for this canton, there are some entries for Cantons Aargau, St. Gallen, and Schaffhausen, as well. The census started in the year 1634 and in some cases continue on till 1767. These records show family relationships and sometimes even go further back than the church records.

All small communities appear separately. If for some reason you can't find your location, then look for the larger community, generally the parish.